

Veterans Oppose Antenna Plan For Memorial Hill

BY DAVE ANDERTON

Wave Editor

8-11-99

Veterans on Monday said they opposed a proposed business plan that would place cell tower antennas on top of Memorial Hill.

Under the proposal, the antennas would be hidden inside of four flagpoles. In addition to the new poles, a small maintenance building would be located off the crest of the hill and would be partly buried. The antennas would provide reception for cell phones.

For use of hill, AT&T would pay Wasatch County \$600 a month. The money would be used to build a park on the hill, according to Wasatch County Commission Chair Mike Kohler.

Veterans were not impressed.

"I revere that hill," said Dr. Robert Raymond Green, a veteran who served in the Coast Guard. "Are we going to stand for commercialism on our Memorial Hill?"

Memorial Hill has honored veterans for as long as Midway resident Daniel Ballstaedt can remember. Ballstaedt, 90, served as a merchant marine in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Ballstaedt said the antennas would detract from the purpose of hill.

"If we turn the hill over to AT&T it ceases to be a

Memorial Hill. I say keep them out," Ballstaedt said.

The hill was owned privately until 1924 when Wasatch County purchased the property. The memorial once contained bronze plaques listing the names of local war veterans dating back to the Indian Wars. In 1976, the plaques were stolen. Since then the site has become a haven for loiterers and drug dealers.

"If we are going to have the memorial it ought to be maintained," said Bill McNaughtan, a veteran and member of the Wasatch County Planning Commission. "We can't stand here and say it's a great place and do nothing."

But some veterans said they would rather pay higher taxes to maintain the hill than accept money from AT&T.

"When you let a commercial entity into the property it only increases in size," warned Green. Green worried that additional poles and other telecommunications companies could encroach. "A memorial is a memorial is a memorial. It's like putting an antenna in our cemetery."

Commissioners told veterans they appreciated their input. "I saw it as an opportunity to make money and improve the hill," Commissioner Kohler said. "If nothing else, I have united the veterans."

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The Wasatch Wave (USPS 666-820) is published weekly for \$21 per year in Wasatch County, Senior Citizen Discount, \$18 in county; \$27 out-of-county by Wave Publishing Inc., 675 West 100 South, Heber City, UT 84032. Periodicals Postage Paid at Heber City, UT 84032, POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Wasatch Wave*, P.O. Box 128, Heber City, UT 84032.

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Inserted Flyers	Thursday, 12:00 p.m.
Display Advertising	Friday, 4:00 p.m.
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